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Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system: review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Coordination, programme and other questions: mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/49 of 24 July 2003. It assesses the implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 throughout the United Nations system and at the intergovernmental level. The report provides an overall analysis and highlights continuing gaps in and challenges to gender mainstreaming that the Council may wish to focus on in the review and appraisal.

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I. Introduction

1. Gender mainstreaming was endorsed as a strategy for promoting equality between women and men by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The Economic and Social Council adopted agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system at its coordination segment on 18 July 1997.[1] The importance of the gender mainstreaming strategy was reiterated by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session in June 2000.[2]

2. The Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions defined gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels, and as a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. The Council provided principles for mainstreaming a gender perspective in the United Nations system and made specific recommendations on the intergovernmental process, institutional requirements for gender mainstreaming, including the role of gender units and focal points, capacity-building and gender mainstreaming in the integrated follow-up to global United Nations conferences.

3. The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 2003/287 of 24 July 2003, decided to undertake, during its coordination segment in 2004, a review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2. In its resolution 2003/49 of 24 July 2003,[3] the Council requested the Secretary-General to include in his report recommendations for the review and appraisal.

4. The present report is submitted in response to the request of the Council. It is based on an analysis of information received from United Nations entities,[4] the work of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, as well as previous reports of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council, and the General Assembly since 1997. It assesses progress in the integration of gender perspectives into all policies and programmes throughout the United Nations system and at the intergovernmental level. The report provides an overall analysis and highlights continuing gaps in and challenges to gender mainstreaming that the Council may wish to focus on in follow-up to the review and appraisal.[5]

II. Gender mainstreaming in United Nations entities

A. Policy, strategy and budget frameworks

5. Most entities have developed policies on gender equality which use gender mainstreaming as the major strategy for achieving their goals. Specific policies on gender equality are needed to provide critical guidance on gender mainstreaming, indicate senior management commitment and establish accountability. Many policies were developed in connection with the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995

or its follow-up, the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000. Several United Nations entities have developed new policies and strategies or revised existing ones in recent years. A number of entities have not yet adopted gender equality policies or strategies; some are currently in the process of developing such policies or have recently been urged to do so by their governing bodies.

6. Some newly developed or revised gender equality policies include implementation tools and methodologies, as well as monitoring mechanisms. Some entities have also developed implementation or action plans for existing gender equality policies and strategies. In a number of entities, gender equality policies or strategies were developed in the context of the preparation of medium-term plans or programme budgets.

7. The involvement of different categories of staff, in particular senior management, in the elaboration of gender policies and strategies has proven to be crucial for increased commitment to implementing gender mainstreaming and ensuring accountability and systematic monitoring of its practical application. The linkages between the goal of gender equality and the overall goals of the entity have to be established and the implications for policy and programme development clearly outlined. Roles, responsibilities, including those of managers at all levels, and accountability mechanisms should be explicitly defined, together with the institutional arrangements, including gender specialist resources and capacity-building approaches. An action plan should be developed which outlines measurable goals for all areas of activity, with time frames and indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

8. While the existence of gender equality policies in United Nations entities has contributed to increased awareness and provided a necessary framework for gender mainstreaming, practical implementation remains a challenge. The gap remaining between policy and implementation is a major challenge, which should be specifically addressed in the review and appraisal.

9. Experience has shown that, in addition to the important overall framework provided by the Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions and the specific gender equality policies developed within entities, there is also a need to incorporate gender perspectives explicitly into sector policies and strategies. Measurable goals should be established, with time frames and indicators for monitoring and evaluation, as well as mechanisms for holding staff accountable for gender mainstreaming in sector areas.

10. Many entities have made efforts to integrate gender perspectives into sectoral policies and strategies. However, attention to gender perspectives is not systematic in all areas covered by the mandates of United Nations entities. Gaps remain, for example, in poverty eradication, macroeconomic development, energy, sanitation, infrastructure, social protection, rural development, and peace and security. Without specific attention to gender perspectives at the sector policy and strategy level, it is difficult to provide a consistent focus on gender perspectives at the operational level.

11. Not all entities have systematically paid attention to gender perspectives in their programme budgets. Even where entities have carried out extensive work promoting gender equality, these efforts have not always been adequately reflected

in programme planning and budgets. The introduction of results-based budgeting throughout the United Nations system has provided opportunities for increasing attention to gender perspectives in the preparation of medium-term plans, programme budgets and multi-year funding frameworks. Efforts have been undertaken to link gender equality policies and strategies to overall policy goals and allocate financial resources to gender mainstreaming in different sector areas.

12. An inter-agency task force focused on gender mainstreaming in programme budget processes from 1999 to 2003.[6] Case studies were carried out in 14 entities and efforts made to increase collaboration between programme managers, budget staff and gender specialists in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of programme budgets. The work of the task force led to increased attention to gender perspectives in recent budget documents across the system.

13. In some entities, financial resources for gender mainstreaming have increased since 1997. Other entities have reported that overall budget cuts have led to decreased resources to support gender mainstreaming. Specific challenges have been experienced in terms of funding the gender specialists required to provide advice, support and capacity-building.

14. It has proven difficult to assess allocation of resources to gender mainstreaming. Some entities have made specific allocations for gender mainstreaming, particularly for institutional development activities such as training or development of guidelines and other materials. Other entities expect that attention to gender perspectives will be covered by overall budget allocations. Experience has shown that explicit attention to the resources required for gender mainstreaming is important for successful implementation. Entities which have developed policies and action plans for gender mainstreaming without attention to resource allocations have been constrained in implementation.

15. Challenges with regard to measurement include that of quantifying the exact amount of funding utilized in efforts to make gender perspectives an integral part of all activities. Even where resources for gender mainstreaming have increased, it is not always possible with existing monitoring and reporting systems to ascertain how much of the available funding is being spent on gender mainstreaming activities. Actual spending can also be directly related to levels of capacity for integrating gender perspectives into programmes activities.

16. A number of entities have been dependent on extrabudgetary resources for gender mainstreaming and some have recently lost this support. Use of extrabudgetary funding can present both opportunities and challenges. Extrabudgetary resources are difficult to predict and may not enhance the sustainability of gender mainstreaming efforts in the long term. On the other hand, in the short term, extrabudgetary resources have made possible important initiatives in support of gender mainstreaming, including in the area of capacity-building and development of resource materials, which have had a positive impact on gender mainstreaming.

B. Programmes and operational activities

17. Since the adoption of the agreed conclusions in 1997, United Nations entities have made considerable efforts to incorporate gender perspectives in their

programmes and operational activities. Diverse gender mainstreaming initiatives at the operational level have been undertaken by United Nations entities, including funds and programmes, specialized agencies and Secretariat departments that engage in technical cooperation programmes. Entities have worked at the operational level to draw attention to gender perspectives in data collection, research and analysis, and training activities undertaken across the system.

18. Progress has been made in gender mainstreaming in sector areas where systematic consideration of gender perspectives had not taken place prior to 1997, including peace and security, humanitarian issues and reconstruction work, democratic governance, information and communication technologies, and HIV/AIDS.

19. Gaps between policies and programming — that is, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation — still exist in many sector areas. Even where gender concerns are integrated into the design of programmes and operational activities, this does not always translate into gender-sensitive implementation. Despite the availability of materials, resources and tools on gender mainstreaming, programme officers and field staff of many entities lack capacity to use these tools in their daily work and implement gender mainstreaming. The documentation and dissemination of practical experience, lessons learned and good practices is critical for successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in programmes and operational activities.

20. The monitoring by headquarters of progress in the field is a major challenge, especially at the levels of outcomes and long-term impact. Results-based reporting systems have supported more accurate monitoring. However, difficulties persist in accurately capturing cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality.

21. As Governments make efforts to address gender issues in their programmes, the demand for technical support and capacity-building at the country and regional levels has risen. Resources have, however, remained limited. The need for greater coordination and collaboration among entities on gender mainstreaming in operational activities has become increasingly apparent. The establishment of United Nations country team structures and theme groups, including gender theme groups, has provided opportunities to enhance the integration of cross-cutting issues, including gender perspectives, into programmes and operational activities. Resident Coordinators have an important role to play in ensuring the commitment of country teams to systematic gender mainstreaming. Assessment of annual reports by Resident Coordinators reveals that capacity-building initiatives to sensitize government officials and United Nations staff and NGOs, have included training on gender-responsive budgeting and legislation. Other initiatives were undertaken to support the development of national capacity on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, including for national statistics offices on sex-disaggregated data.

22. A recent survey reported an increase in the number of country-level gender theme groups.[7] The activities of these groups cover advocacy, technical support, capacity-building and community-level interventions. Gender theme groups have, however, faced constraints due to limited mandates, lack of capacity and lack of seniority of their members.

23. Less has been done to ensure that other country theme groups, for example on HIV/AIDS, give adequate attention to gender perspectives. Theme groups for other

sectoral areas should include gender specialists who can provide technical advice and support.

24. Operational instruments constitute important entry points for the integration of cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, into development processes. Progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives into Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes has been evidenced by the positive changes in the CCA/UNDAF guidelines — from the acknowledgement of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in 1999, to establishing gender equality as one of the guiding principles in 2002. The importance of incorporating attention to the gender inequalities identified in the CCA into the development assistance framework was highlighted in the revised guidelines of 2003. However, despite progress made to include gender perspectives in these guidelines, major gaps still exist in the integration of gender perspectives into CCA/UNDAF documents and in country programming follow-up. The attention to gender issues remains limited to a few sectoral areas, such as education, health and microeconomic issues. Gender perspectives are not systematically addressed in other critical areas, such as macroeconomics, taxation, employment, agriculture, transport, water, environment and housing.

25. Successful mainstreaming of gender perspectives in CCAs/UNDAFs requires systematic use of gender analysis and sex-disaggregated statistics; consultation with national machineries for the advancement of women and with women's groups and networks; and formulation of concrete recommendations to address the gender inequalities identified. The Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, should be utilized as critical resources in the process.

26. A recent desk review[8] found that the proportion of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) that gave attention to gender inequalities increased substantially in 2003 compared with 2002. United Nations entities can provide effective support to gender mainstreaming in PRSPs, in collaboration with national machineries for the advancement of women, and women's groups and networks. The United Nations can raise gender issues in the country dialogue, promote access to gender analysis methodologies and tools, provide capacity-building in monitoring and implementation, and fund gender experts.

27. United Nations entities also have an important role to play in joint staff assessments in the preparation of PRSPs. The guidelines for joint staff assessments emphasize the importance both of ensuring the participation of women's groups in the PRSP process and of identifying the gender perspectives of poverty. However, based on a review of joint staff assessments of 21 interim PRSPs and 33 PRSPs, there were inconsistencies in both the quality and quantity of attention to gender perspectives. A World Bank review on gender in the PRSP in 2001 found that fewer than one quarter of joint staff assessments of interim PRSPs recommended further diagnosis, actions or monitoring related to gender equality.[9] Since the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund rely on joint staff assessment analyses when they approve PRSPs, the assessments are an important leverage point for ensuring that gender perspectives are reflected in PRSPs.

28. Increased attention is being given to the incorporation of gender perspectives in the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal Process (CAP) led by the Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Progress has been made since the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted the CAP guidelines in 1994, in which no reference was made to gender equality. A number of reviews have been carried out since then to further improve these guidelines which have highlighted the lack of attention to gender perspectives. The revised guidelines of 2003 also benefited from a report commissioned by the IASC Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance to review gender mainstreaming in the CAP. The report emphasized major gaps in gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data in CAP documents and the lack of concrete initiatives to promote gender equality. The report also identified the need for further capacity-building and training on the integration of gender perspectives. OCHA is currently carrying out a review of the 1999 IASC gender policy in time for the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council in 2004.

29. National Millennium Development Goal reports present trends and identify achievements and continuing challenges. The preparation of these reports provide an important opportunity for raising awareness, forming alliances and developing national capacity on gender mainstreaming, and for assessing the extent to which gender perspectives are taken into consideration in national development policies. Recent assessments[10] indicate that country-level reports have focused on education and health and, to a lesser extent, on economic and political participation. It is important to consider gender equality as critical for the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals, rather than solely in the context of Millennium Development Goal 3. Constraints are faced in relation to data analysis and capacity-building. These are being addressed by a number of entities, including through the development of indicators and monitoring methodologies that take gender perspectives into account.

30. A recent assessment of national Millennium Development Goal reports undertaken by UNDP in 13 countries concludes that gender issues were not reflected as a cross-cutting issue in any of the reports. Only in relation to Goal 3, which specifically deals with gender equality, had gender issues been consistently addressed across countries.

C. Institutional arrangements

31. United Nations entities have developed institutional mechanisms to facilitate effective implementation of gender mainstreaming, including specialist resources and gender focal points, capacity-building activities, methodologies and tools, statistics and indicators, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

1. Gender specialist resources

32. The use of gender specialist resources has varied considerably across the United Nations system since 1997. Common challenges have, however, been experienced with regard to level of positions, mandates, access to resources and decision-making, and the extent of senior management support. Many larger United Nations entities have gender advisers and/or gender units. A number of entities have established internal or external advisory bodies with high-level participation. These groups guide policy-making and programming. In general, specialist resource levels have remained constant since 1997. Some entities have seen an increase in gender

specialists, while a number have reported a decrease in resources, including because of reorganization.

33. Experience has shown that the need for specialist support can increase with the introduction of gender mainstreaming and the shift of responsibility for promoting gender equality to all staff, including senior management. Gender specialists should not be seen as solely responsible for gender mainstreaming. Their role is to support senior managers in fulfilling their management responsibilities for gender mainstreaming. Gender specialists should promote, support and monitor progress in gender mainstreaming. Technical advice and support, including on methodologies and tools for gender analysis and capacity-building, is critical. For gender specialists to perform their roles effectively, however, they require adequate allocation of resources, clear mandates and strategic location within organizations. In particular, they require the strong support of senior management.

34. A common practice throughout the system has been the establishment of networks of gender focal points both at headquarters and in the field. Focal points are normally staff in technical work units who are assigned to spend part of their time promoting, supporting and monitoring gender mainstreaming. An inter-agency study[11] carried out in 2001 identified a number of serious constraints faced by gender focal points. Most gender focal points were women (over 90 per cent) at junior level. Many had no prior experience, expertise or interest in gender issues. In many cases their roles and responsibilities were unclear and were not reflected in their work plans. Their access to decision-making and resources was limited. The gender focal points had generally received no training and support systems (such as active networks) were not in place. This limited the effectiveness of the focal points. These constraints continue to exist.

35. Some entities have found, however, that gender focal points can play a significant role in supporting gender mainstreaming if an enabling environment is developed which addresses the constraints outlined above. In particular, functioning networks, with support provided from headquarters to field-level gender focal points, have proven useful. Entities have stressed the value of involving more senior staff members in gender focal point networks. The need for a greater gender balance has also been emphasized. Some entities have found that rotation of gender focal point responsibilities can contribute to increasing the number of gender-sensitive staff.

36. Entities have also developed electronic gender equality knowledge networks, linking gender focal points and specialists at headquarters and in regional and country offices, to further the development of capacity and institutional memory.[12]

37. Catalytic support for gender mainstreaming has also been provided throughout the United Nations system by the entities specializing in gender equality, including the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) in the form of advocacy, advice, resources and the development of pilot activities.

2. Capacity-building, including development of methodologies and tools

38. One of the main areas of activity undertaken across the United Nations system to support gender mainstreaming has been capacity-building. The majority of entities have invested in training programmes for staff and partners and the development of methodologies and tools. Training programmes and resource materials have been developed for different categories of staff: budget staff, technical and sectoral staff, senior managers, and gender specialists and focal points. Different types of training have been used, including generic gender mainstreaming training and training specifically tailored to sectoral areas. A variety of training methodologies and tools have been developed. A number of entities have compiled training resources and other tools for gender mainstreaming on their web sites.[13]

39. Capacity-building efforts in the United Nations have not always been as effective as could be desired. While some entities have reported successful outcomes of their training programmes, in many entities training programmes have been organized on an ad hoc basis, with little institutional follow-up. Greater attention must be given to the evaluation of impact. Training should also be more specifically tailored to the needs of participants. Sector-specific training should provide guidance on incorporating gender perspectives in activities and tasks that participants are involved in on a day-to-day basis. Gender analysis methodologies are only useful if advice is provided on how they can be practically applied in the work of participants.

40. Some entities have made efforts to incorporate gender perspectives in existing training programmes, for example for peacekeeping personnel. Gender mainstreaming modules have been integrated into induction sessions for new staff. This has increased awareness of responsibilities and accountability for gender mainstreaming. Further efforts need to be made to influence training programmes in areas such as poverty reduction, macroeconomics and sustainable development, in order to develop greater awareness of the linkages between gender perspectives and those areas.

41. United Nations entities have developed resources and tools for gender mainstreaming. Manuals or guidelines exist for almost every area of work covered by the United Nations system. They include checklists and briefing notes. The inter-agency web site womenwatch has recently established a directory of resources that includes training materials and other resources on gender mainstreaming.[14] The increased exchange of resources across entities of the system is an important means of capacity-building. In some entities, however, a remaining challenge is the fact that while methodologies and tools have been developed for many different sectors, many of these methodologies and tools are inadequately utilized. There has been insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the utilization and relevance of existing resources.

42. A major challenge to effective gender mainstreaming is that gender analysis is not systematically utilized. Even where analysis is carried out, the results are not fully integrated into planning and resource allocations. This challenge has to be addressed by more effective capacity-building activities and increased support from gender specialists.

3. Sex-disaggregated data, gender-specific information and indicators

43. Entities have placed emphasis on the collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific information, as well as on the related development of indicators. Efforts in the field of sex-disaggregated data, gender-specific information and gender-sensitive indicators have taken on increased importance in the context of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the elaboration and implementation of operational instruments, such as CCAs, UNDAFs, and PRSPs. Recently, efforts have been made to develop gender-sensitive indicators for measuring progress in the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals. It is too early to evaluate the extent to which the use of newly developed indicators has influenced policy-making and programming and gender equality outcomes. It is, however, important to develop criteria for monitoring and evaluating such impacts.

44. Progress has been made with regard to sex-disaggregated data and indicators in the field of socio-demographic, education and health statistics. Gaps remain in economic statistics, as well as for migration, energy, water, agriculture and food production, urban and rural development issues, population issues, HIV/AIDS, and information and communication technologies.

45. Several entities have developed statistical databases that are available on the Internet.[15] Many entities produce and disseminate materials for policy makers and the general public, for example periodic reports on major trends and emerging issues, which include an analysis of sex-disaggregated data, gender-specific information and indicators.

46. Several inter-agency initiatives have been undertaken to build up the capacity, commitment and resources of both staff and development partners in the area of statistics and indicators. The five regional commissions have played a leading role in increasing attention to gender mainstreaming in the area of statistics and building the capacity of national statistical institutes.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

47. Most United Nations entities have identified the area of monitoring and evaluation as one of the weakest elements in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Challenges include a lack of regular reporting; inappropriate monitoring systems; lack of access to and use of sex-disaggregated data, gender-specific information and indicators; and failure to utilize the results of monitoring and evaluation exercises to inform policy and programme development.

48. Many entities have conducted specific baseline studies, surveys, audits or evaluations on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Operational entities have pointed to the difficulties of headquarters monitoring of progress in country or regional offices. Entities also stressed the potential value of participatory gender assessments and evaluations, including mid-term reviews, that involve major stakeholders and beneficiaries. These enhance policy planning, programme implementation and follow-up, and contribute to organizational accountability. Entities reported, however, that insufficient capacity of staff and partners was a major obstacle.

49. Most monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming is carried out through specific gender evaluations, audits, assessments or surveys. To a lesser extent, attention is given to the monitoring of progress in gender mainstreaming

through regular evaluation and reporting processes. A lack of gender-specific information and sex-disaggregated data, as well as targets and indicators, constitutes a major obstacle to effective monitoring. A number of entities are, however, working to include attention to gender perspectives in existing monitoring instruments, rather than developing separate monitoring systems for gender mainstreaming.

5. Accountability

50. As underlined by the agreed conclusions, accountability and political will at the highest levels of an entity are important for translation of the gender mainstreaming into practice. Lack of accountability remains one of the major challenges to successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system. Successful gender mainstreaming requires that entities ensure that all categories of staff in their organizations take responsibility and are held accountable for bringing attention to gender perspectives in their areas of work. Challenges persist with regard to ensuring that staff other than gender specialists assume responsibility for gender mainstreaming.

51. Accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming need to be further developed. Some entities have introduced indicators on gender mainstreaming performance into staff appraisals; others have stressed the need to ensure that job descriptions and work plans refer specifically to responsibility and accountability for gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting task. A number of entities have included information on the roles and responsibilities of all staff in gender equality policies, strategies or action plans. Greater efforts need to be made to delineate responsibilities and accountabilities for gender mainstreaming and the ways by which senior managers can hold staff responsible.

52. Weaknesses in monitoring and reporting mechanisms and routines compound problems of accountability within entities.

III. Inter-agency collaboration on gender mainstreaming

53. The agreed conclusions 1997/2 encouraged greater inter-agency collaboration to ensure the integration of gender perspectives into all policies and programmes. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality has facilitated gender mainstreaming since its creation as a standing committee of the former Administrative Committee on Coordination (now the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)). The Inter-Agency Network, which is chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, provides a forum for the exchange of information on gender mainstreaming and collaboration on capacity-building and development of methodologies and tools. The Network has 60 members representing 25 entities. It carries out its work through annual plenary sessions and task forces which focus on gender mainstreaming in a wide range of issues, such as Millennium Development Goals; information and communication technologies; peace and security; CCAs/UNDAFs; trade; water; evaluation and monitoring, and reporting.

54. The Network has increased the capacity of entities to bring attention to gender perspectives in their work programmes. Capacity-building initiatives have included gender mainstreaming training workshops during annual meetings, which have

covered approaches and methodologies; training and capacity-building; preparations for and follow-up of global conferences; and programme reporting and monitoring.

55. In addition to enhancing the ability of entities to integrate gender perspectives into their work, the Network has played a catalytic role in supporting attention to gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes relating to the preparation and outcomes of and follow-up to major conferences and summits. The Network has collaborated with preparatory working groups and other bodies and organized interactive side events and dialogue, for example at the International Conference on Financing for Development (2002) and the World Summit on the Information Society (2003).

56. The Network has become an important actor in the implementation of the agreed conclusions. The Network provides reports on its work to CEB and its high-level committees for programme and management. It has collaborated with stakeholders outside the United Nations system in support of gender mainstreaming, for example the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network on Gender Equality, with which it has organized biannual workshops on specific themes.

57. Many entities are also involved in other inter-agency activities as members of gender networks or ad hoc thematic groupings, including country theme groups. Networks and groups set up to coordinate gender issues in specific sectoral areas, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee task force on gender and humanitarian assistance, and the inter-agency task team on gender and HIV/AIDS, have also contributed to furthering the objectives of the agreed conclusions.

58. A number of other inter-agency bodies have striven to bring greater attention to gender perspectives in their work. These include the United Nations Development Group Working Group on CCA/UNDAF Quality Assurance, which included gender as an indicator for success in the quality support and assurance system and in the revised CCA/UNDAF guidelines, as well as the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, which is developing guidelines for integrating gender dimensions into mine-action programmes. Gender perspectives are also taken up in the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the Executive Committee on Peace and Security and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs.

IV. Mainstreaming gender perspectives at the intergovernmental level

59. Progress in incorporating gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes is important for increasing the gender mainstreaming efforts of the United Nations system. The outcomes of intergovernmental processes provide mandates for the work of United Nations entities. Systematic attention to gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes provides an important impetus for gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system.

60. The Millennium Declaration, the outcomes of other major conferences and summits, and other policies and guidelines adopted by intergovernmental bodies, such as Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, have been used as an important framework for policy development and the design and implementation of programmes and operational activities in United Nations

entities. Many entities have linked their organizational priorities to the Millennium Development Goals.

61. The specific attention paid to gender mainstreaming strategy in the annual reports of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and the resolutions on gender mainstreaming adopted by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly have provided important guidance to the United Nations system since 1997.

A. Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit

62. The conferences and summits of the past decade, including the Millennium Summit in 2000, the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, the United Nations Special Session on Children in 2002, the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2003, have highlighted the cross-cutting nature of gender issues and the importance of gender equality for development. United Nations entities have explicitly used the outcomes of the conferences and summits as a basis for organizational priority setting. Although the extent of attention to gender perspectives has varied greatly in these processes, Governments have made commitments to gender equality and recommended action at the international, regional and national levels. Increased attention has to be given to gender perspectives in the reports which provide the basis for deliberations and recommendations by Member States.

63. The Millennium Declaration and its development goals transformed global agreements into specific time-bound targets and created a new platform for entities to coordinate their initiatives for the achievement of agreed objectives. The Declaration viewed progress towards gender equality as an objective in itself and as a goal that would contribute to the achievement of other development goals. Millennium Development Goal 3 focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women. In assessing its implementation, progress should be measured in relation to each of the other interdependent and mutually reinforcing Millennium Development Goals. Gender perspectives should be taken into account in actions aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger, improving education, reducing maternal and child mortality, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability and partnerships for development. Analysis of gender equality perspectives in relation to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals should be an important focus of the review and appraisal of the Millennium Declaration due to take place in 2005.

B. The General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies

64. Since the adoption of the agreed conclusions, the General Assembly has considered gender perspectives in discussions and resolutions adopted at its regular sessions. In plenary, the Assembly has considered gender perspectives in relation to development, international cooperation and humanitarian or political assistance to particular Member States. Since 2001, annual follow-up to the Millennium

Declaration has enabled the Assembly to examine gender equality in relation to education and maternal mortality. Gender perspectives have not been regularly reviewed in relation to the other goals.

65. The Second and Third Committees have paid most attention to gender equality. The Second Committee has addressed women in development issues on a biannual basis, and gender issues in financing for development, sustainable development, industrial development cooperation, human resources development, operational activities for development and the follow-up to the first Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. Other issues, such as macroeconomic policy questions and science and technology, have not been considered systematically from a gender perspective. The Third Committee has devoted two agenda items specifically to gender equality and taken up gender mainstreaming under other agenda items relating to social development, youth, ageing, disabled persons, family issues, human rights, including specific country situations, crime prevention and criminal justice, refugee and displaced persons, humanitarian issues and children's rights.

66. The First Committee has paid attention to women in the context of disarmament, mainly in relation to the organization of specific events. The Fourth Committee has addressed gender perspectives to a limited extent, in relation to the need to publicize United Nations accomplishments, including in the area of women's rights, through its information centres. The Fifth Committee has considered the development of a policy on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping. In its codification work, the Sixth Committee has addressed the potential effects of human cloning on women and the issue of trafficking in women, but has not paid attention to gender issues in other areas. There is scope for focusing on the importance of gender issues in areas such as budgetary and legal matters.

C. The Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions

67. Since 1997, the Economic and Social Council and its commissions have paid greater attention to gender equality both as a goal in itself and as a tool to achieve sectoral objectives. Consideration of gender issues by the Council and its various subsidiary bodies, however, has been uneven. The Council has addressed gender issues in all its segments since 1997. Gender perspectives have been integrated to varying degrees in policy-making, in coordination activities, in reviewing the work of the functional and regional commissions, and in assessing operational activities for development.

68. The high-level segments and Ministerial Declarations of the Council since 1999 have referred to the role of women or gender perspectives in relation to the role of work and employment in poverty eradication; information technology; the role of the United Nations in support of sustainable development in Africa; human resources development, including in the area of health and education; and rural development for poverty eradication and sustainable development. In its coordination segment in 2001, the Council discussed gender perspectives in information and communication technology.

69. The humanitarian segments in 1999 and 2002 stressed the need for the integration of a gender perspective into humanitarian activities, peace-building, conflict prevention and recovery. In its operational segment, the Council devoted its high-level meeting in 1998 to a discussion of operational activities in promoting

capacity-building and resource mobilization for the participation of women in development.

70. Since 2001, the agenda of the general segment has included a sub-item on mainstreaming, which has raised the visibility of the issue in relation to the Council's review of the work of its functional commissions. In 2002 and 2003, interactive panel discussions on gender mainstreaming complemented the deliberations.

71. Since 1997, many of the Council's 10 functional commissions[16] have increasingly focused on gender issues in relation to their specific sectoral mandates. For example, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development have made efforts to consider gender perspectives as an integrated component of their work programmes. The Commission on Human Rights has integrated gender perspectives into its work, both under a separate agenda item and by taking gender issues into account in its thematic or country resolutions. Gender mainstreaming could be further promoted through the regular meetings of the Council's Bureau with the bureaux of its subsidiary bodies.

72. Valuable synergies between the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women on gender mainstreaming have been facilitated through the coordination of policies and reporting, and the participation of their chairpersons and of Secretariat staff in their respective meetings, as well as by the joint work programme of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

73. In the context of the multi-year programme of work, the Commission on the Status of Women has considered the gender dimensions of specific sectoral policies with a view to contributing to the integration of gender perspectives into the preparation and outcomes of, and follow-up to, major summits and conferences in the social and economic fields, for example the World Summit for Social Development and the World Summit on the Information Society. The Commission on the Status of Women has played a catalytic role in supporting gender mainstreaming in the Council and its commissions, inter alia by urging the inclusion of gender perspectives in reports and review processes.

74. While there has been interaction between the Commission on the Status of Women and some functional commissions, including the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the Commission on Social Development, other subsidiary bodies and the Council itself, have not made consistent use of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, including its agreed conclusions on specific sectoral issues, such as natural disasters or information and communication technologies.

D. The Security Council

75. Over the past decade, the Security Council has taken into account the changing nature of conflict and focused increasingly on the prevention of armed conflict, the protection of civilians, children in armed conflict and reviews of the effectiveness of multidimensional peace operations. The Security Council has taken steps to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in the field of peace and security, following

the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security in 2000. In that resolution, gender perspectives were identified in relation to peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives. The resolution has provided an important framework for action on gender mainstreaming in the areas of peace and security for other intergovernmental bodies, United Nations entities and NGOs. Open debates and Arria Formula meetings of the Security Council have provided opportunities to assess progress and forge links between the Council and NGOs.

76. In compliance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), a study on women, peace and security was carried out by the Secretary-General in 2002. A report, based on the findings of the study was submitted to the Security Council and discussed in an open meeting of the Council in October 2002.[17] The President of the Security Council reiterated the support of the Council for the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Concern was expressed at the slow progress in the appointment of women as special representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General and an increase in the number of women serving as high-level representatives was urged. Regular contacts with local women's groups and networks were encouraged, as well as efforts to ensure their full involvement in peace negotiations and reconstruction processes, particularly at decision-making levels.

77. The Security Council has increasingly addressed gender perspectives in its missions. The Council consulted with local women's groups during all three missions in 2003, to West Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, and Afghanistan. This can be compared with the fact that between 2000 and 2002 the Council consulted with women's groups on four out of a total of 10 missions. Assessment missions for the formulation of new peace operations in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti and the Sudan have benefited from briefings on gender issues, the preparation of checklists relating to the inclusion of gender perspectives, and the participation of gender advisers.

78. Challenges remain in relation to ensuring that gender issues are fully mainstreamed into the work of the Security Council. In relation to reports submitted to the Security Council, an analysis of 264 reports by the Secretary-General from January 2000 to September 2003 revealed that two thirds make only one or no mention of women or gender issues. The majority of reports referred to women and girls primarily as victims, not as potential actors who can and do make substantial contributions to peace and security. An analysis of resolutions adopted by the Security Council between January 2000 and March 2004 revealed that only 14.2 per cent include language on women or gender issues. Resolutions mandating new peace operations in 2003 and 2004 referred to the need for gender mainstreaming and included provisions for the establishment of gender units.

79. Monitoring of gender mainstreaming in peace operations has been identified as a particular challenge both at headquarters and in the field. A report by the Secretary-General, due in October 2004, will review the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). It will enable the Council to assess progress made in systematically incorporating attention to gender perspectives in all areas of work on peace and security, and to identify remaining challenges in gender mainstreaming in reports and resolutions, missions, peace negotiations, and the establishment and monitoring of multidimensional peace operations.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

80. **The agreed conclusions remain a valid framework for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations. United Nations entities and intergovernmental bodies have made progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives into all policies and programmes since 1997. However, further efforts are required to ensure the full implementation of the agreed conclusions. The gap between policy and practice remains a major constraint. Initiatives need to be undertaken at all levels to increase the active and visible use of gender mainstreaming as a complement to women-focused strategies. Commitment, support and accountability are required at the highest levels within entities.**

81. **Gender equality policies and strategies are largely in place throughout the United Nations system. Although attention has been given to many of the institutional requirements, such as specialist gender resources or networks of focal points, capacity-building activities and the development and use of methodologies and tools, including sex-disaggregated data, serious challenges remain at the institutional level. These include underdeveloped monitoring mechanisms and reporting requirements; lack of effective accountability mechanisms; inadequate availability and utilization of gender specialist resources; and insufficient capacity to carry out and apply gender analysis.**

82. **Inter-agency collaboration has significantly enhanced the use of the gender mainstreaming strategy through support for policy development, capacity-building, development of methodologies and tools, monitoring mechanisms, integration into budget processes, and advocacy and outreach in intergovernmental processes. Inter-agency collaboration will be increasingly important, particularly at operational levels.**

83. **The progress made in mainstreaming gender perspectives at the intergovernmental level has had an important impact on efforts throughout the United Nations system.**

84. **The Council may wish to take note of the progress achieved and put forward the following recommendations.**

The Council may wish to encourage United Nations entities to:

Policy, strategy and budget frameworks

- **Establish gender equality policy frameworks linked to overall organizational priorities, where these do not yet exist, and regularly assess their impact;**
- **Develop strategies or action plans for implementation, with clear guidelines on the practical application of gender mainstreaming;**
- **Fully integrate gender perspectives into sectoral policies and strategies;**
- **Incorporate attention to gender perspectives in medium-term plans, programme budgets and multi-year funding frameworks;**

Programmes and operational activities

- **Increase the demand for and capacity to carry out and systematically utilize gender analysis, including in operational activities;**
- **Fully incorporate gender perspectives in all reports prepared for intergovernmental bodies, including the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, the General Assembly and the Security Council;**
- **Ensure increased integration of gender perspectives into all operational mechanisms, such as CCAs, UNDAFs, PRSPs, and other processes, for example in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, including through enhanced inter-agency cooperation;**
- **Enhance the effectiveness of the gender theme groups by increasing the level of seniority of members, establishing clear mandates, developing links to other theme groups and providing adequate resources;**
- **Ensure attention to gender perspectives in all theme groups at the country level;**
- **Ensure, in addition to specific monitoring and evaluation of progress in gender mainstreaming, systematic integration of reporting on gender mainstreaming into existing monitoring and evaluation processes, including on the Millennium Development Goals;**

Institutional arrangements

- **Ensure adequate mandates, decision-making powers, access to information and resources and support from senior management for specialist gender resources, including gender focal points and theme groups in the field, and increase the number of men involved in this work;**
- **Increase awareness of the responsibilities of all staff for gender mainstreaming, including senior management, and develop effective accountability mechanisms;**
- **Develop more effective specialized training programmes, including adequate attention to follow-up, and integrate gender perspectives into all existing training programmes;**
- **Ensure systematic and effective dissemination, utilization and monitoring of the relevance of, methodologies, tools and good practice examples, including through inter-agency collaboration;**
- **Increase availability and use of sex-disaggregated data, gender-specific information and indicators in all sectors, including through inter-agency collaboration and increased collaboration with national statistical bodies.**

The Council may wish to encourage the governing bodies of agencies, funds and programmes to:

- **Ensure increased attention to gender mainstreaming in the exercise of their monitoring functions in medium-term plans, multi-year funding frameworks and programme budgets, and in the implementation and monitoring of operational activities.**

The Council may wish to establish consideration of gender mainstreaming as a regular agenda item in meetings of its bureau with the bureaux of functional commissions, and to encourage its functional commissions to:

- **Take further measures to integrate gender perspectives into their respective sector areas, including through their annual or multi-year work programmes, and in the integrated and coordinated follow-up to major conferences and summits;**
- **Increase their interaction with the Commission on the Status of Women and the use of specific guidance provided by that Commission for their sector areas.**

The Council may wish to encourage the Commission of Women to:

- **Contribute more systematically to the work of United Nations entities, the Council, other functional commissions, the General Assembly, other intergovernmental bodies and coordination mechanisms by providing practical guidance on gender mainstreaming.**

The Council may wish to recommend that the General Assembly:

- **Encourage its Committees and other bodies to take further measures to systematically integrate gender perspectives into all areas of their work;**
- **Ensure increased attention to mainstreaming gender perspectives into the integrated and coordinated follow-up to major summits and conferences, in particular the review and appraisal process of the Millennium Declaration in 2005.**

The Council may wish to recommend that the Security Council:

- **Ensure the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), so that gender perspectives are integrated into the mandates, policies and programmes of all peace operations, and into peace negotiations and peace-building initiatives;**
- **Increase access to specialist gender resources who can provide technical assistance at headquarters and in the field;**
- **Ensure the incorporation of gender perspectives in all assessment missions;**
- **Increase attention to gender perspectives in all resolutions.**

The Council may wish to recommend the following action on inter-agency coordination mechanisms:

- **The IANWGE should continue its work in policy development, capacity-building, the development of methodologies and tools, the exchange of good practices, the development of effective monitoring and evaluation processes and the provision of practical support to its members in gender mainstreaming and report annually to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination;**
- **All inter-agency mechanisms should give attention to gender perspectives in their work.**

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* and addendum (A/52/3/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Special Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/S-23/10/Rev.1).

[3] See resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2003 (E/2003/INF/2/Add.4).

[4] The following United Nations entities responded to a questionnaire: Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Department for Disarmament Affairs; Department of Management; Department of Political Affairs; Department of Public Information; Department for Peacekeeping Operations; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Office of Legal Affairs; Office of Internal Oversight Services; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; International Atomic Energy Agency; International Civil Aviation Organization; United Nations Children's Fund; International Civil Service Commission; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; International Fund for Agricultural Development; United Nations Development Fund for Women; International Maritime Organization; International Telecommunication Union; World Bank; World Food Programme; and the World Intellectual Property Organization. The International Organization for Migration also provided information.

[5] The report of the Secretary-General is complemented by four conference room papers providing more details on gender mainstreaming in operational work, in the work on peace and security, in intergovernmental processes and the contributions of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. Further details of the work of United Nations entities are to be found in document E/CN.6/2004/3.

[6] See http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/activities/tfprogbudgproc.htm.

[7] UNDP/UNIFEM, *Scan of Gender Expertise in the UN System*, May 2003, p. 5.

[8] World Bank, Gender and Development Group, *Implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy: Second Annual Monitoring Report, FY03*, 2004.

[9] World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, Gender and Development Group, 9 August 2001, *Gender in the PRSPs: A Stocktaking*.

[10] For example, UNDP, *Millennium Development Goals National Reports: A View through the Gender Lens*, May 2003, http://www.undp.org/gender/docs/mdgs-genderlens.pdf.

[11] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gmfpstudy.htm.

[12] For example, the Gender Equality Network, facilitated by UNDP, used by staff of several United Nations Development Group member agencies.

[13] For example, INSTRAW, ECLAC, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNITAR, ILO, OCHA, UNIFEM, and the inter-agency web site, womenwatch.

[14] See http://www.un.org/womenwatch.

[15] For example the Statistical Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank, ECE and ESCWA.

[16] Commission for Social Development, Statistical Commission, Commission on Human Rights, Commission on Population and Development, Commission on Sustainable Development, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, United Nations Forum on Forests, Commission on the Status of Women.

[17] United Nations sales publication No. E.03.IV.1 and document S/2002/1154.